DUYFKEN 1606 REPLICA

Duyfken to Set Sail for New Home in Sydney

Posted on November 27, 2020 by Pic Lee Song - Duyfken movements, Duyfken update In 2020, Duyfken celebrated her 21st birthday, having been first launched in 1999 in her home port of Fremantle – the result of community, corporate and government funding to bring to fruition the idea of building a replica of the original Dutch sailing ship Duyfken that arrived on the shores of Australia way back in 1606, marking a date in history when Europeans first recorded an encounter with this continent.

Since her launch, the replica Duyfken has embarked on many great voyages and adventures in her quest to share with communities within Australia and internationally the great story of the Dutch maritime connection to the evolving history of Australia.

So, over her first 21 years, the replica has spent nearly half that life in locations other than her birth home of Fremantle, providing opportunities for those of all ages to experience life, as it was, aboard a sailing ship from 400 years ago. Since 2012, Duyfken has provided that experience to the community of Western Australia, through walk on exhibition programs and sailing adventures on Perth's Swan River. To do this great work required substantial funding. The Western Australian Government saw value in this work and took on the role of supporting the Foundation to the tune of $250,000 plus per year with a grant agreement.

Over the past eight years, the WA Government has contributed $2.8 million towards the operations of Duyfken.In 2020, that grant agreement came to an end, with the government determining not to continue with funding support. A big financial hole left to fill.

After much due diligence, through further conversations with the Government and corporate sectors within Western Australia, it became quite apparent that there was a clear lack of interest in providing ongoing financial support to the Duyfken Foundation, and by conse-quence, this would leave the Foundation unable to meet its growing maintenance and operational costs.

For perspective, Duyfken required around $6 million of support over the next 20 years.

What to do then? Well, by good fortune, the Australian National Maritime Museum heard of Duyfken's plight, and recognsing the significance of this replica ship in telling the Dutch maritime story, the Museum opened a conversation with the Board of the Duyfken Foundation.

After months of conversations, an agreement was reached that will see Duyfken gifted to the Museum, securing the ship's future for the rest of its useful life.

Based on recent assessments of Duyfken's physical condition, that could be up to 50 years.

Naturally, such a decision impacts the heart of the Duyfken Foundation, those members and volunteers who have treated the ship like a member of their own families. For some, that has been a journey of many years. No doubt there will be a tear or two shed as Duyfken departs Fremantle.

That said, this decision has been made with the best interests of the ship's long-term life in mind. The last thing the Board wanted to see was the ship under-funded and deteriorating before the community's eyes – that would have been a tragedy. Duyfken is due to head East aboard a transport ship as deck cargo, leaving on or about December 4, 2020, arriving in Newcastle around December 12, 2020. Upon arrival, Duyfken will be unloaded, the masts will be re-stepped, rigging tensioned and sails fitted in preparation for a 70nm sail down the coast of NSW, to arrive in Sydney Harbour on Wednesday December 23, 2020.

Our 'Little Dove' is sure to make a grand entrance, as she sails down the harbour towards the Opera House and Sydney Harbour Bridge, to finally berth at her new home in Darling Harbour.

So, from Fremantle, it will be "Farewell Little Dove".

To those in Sydney – take care of our 'Little Dove'!